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| School Travel Action Plan Guidance |

*October 2019*

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| **Introduction** |

The School Travel Action Plan template is designed to help Safe Routes to School (SRTS) practitioners, coordinators, schools and communities write a School Travel Action Plan by compiling information in one place, as it is collected and created throughout the planning process. Please read entire template before proceeding.

The School Travel Action Plan is a community based approach for increasing rates of active school travel. School staff, parents and students work together with community stakeholders, such as city or county staff, non-profits and public health officials to create the SRTS Travel Action Plan. The document will be revisited on a regular basis, adapting the School Travel Action Plan and tracking implementation and data collection results.

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| **Safe Routes to School Overview** |

SRTS is a community approach that creates fun, convenient and safe opportunities for more students to walk and roll to and from school. This is done by working with the elements of SRTS:

***Equity:***

Distribute SRTS planning, resources, and educational programming equitably across the district. We strive to incorporate equity into each of the elements listed above.

***Evaluation:***

Data collection, including student transportation tallies, parent surveys, car counts, bicycle counts, walk and roll assessments, and infrastructure conditions, in order to determine existing conditions and to gauge the effectiveness of the program.

***Education:***

Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, proper walking and bicycling behaviors, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

***Encouragement:***

Encouragement activities motivate children to walk, bike, scoot, and skate to school. Activities can include Walk and Roll to School Day/Challenge, Walking School Buses and Bike Trains.

***Engineering:***

Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways. Engineering strategies are best used in conjunction with the remaining E’s. Engineers typically like problem statements, not solutions. Your team identifies the problems; let the professionals suggest operational fixes.

***Enforcement:***

Enforcement activities help protect students using active transportation by deterring unsafe behaviors of all road users and encouraging them to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement tools include crossing guard programs, traffic speed readers, targeted police patrols and safety awareness campaigns.

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| **Guidance** |
| The guidance below is designed to help you with working on each of the seven sections of the plan. |

**Section 1: Safe Routes to School Team**

This section includes information on team members at your school who will be working toward SRTS goals. It also includes identification of additional stakeholders outside of your core planning team. It is important to assemble a SRTS Team that has diverse perspectives and roles. People are more likely to get involved if they feel like participation benefits their goals and will be time well-spent. Consider how involvement in the SRTS Team benefits each participant and try to make it relevant for everyone.

Key Partners

1. School Representative: School Principal or designated school staff representative endorsed by the school district, if one exists.

Support from the principal or assistant principal can create momentum, investment, and a can-do attitude for SRTS. Key roles include sending official communications to families, strategizing about appropriate activities and events for the school, providing insight into hurdles and how to overcome them, and taking actions to improve traffic flow and increase safety during arrival and dismissal time.

Principals benefit from SRTS through the opportunity to address safety concerns, better engagement with families, and healthy and focused students.

1. Parent Representative: A parent who is a representative of or has the endorsement of a recognized school/parent organization, if one exists.

SRTS activities should address families’ concerns about transportation safety while feeling fun and being easy to get involved in. Parents and extended family members are ideal volunteers to spread the word about meetings and events, to set up a meet-and-greet table during drop-off or pickup to share resources, and to identify walking, biking, carpooling and bussing facility needs. Families benefit from SRTS through reduced traffic congestion near schools, healthier children, and more opportunities for physical activity and socializing.

1. City or County Representative: City or county staff or representative endorsed by the local road authority.

Local jurisdictions can help find funding for SRTS personnel, coordinate citywide activities and events, pass supportive policies, and prioritize SRTS issues. The jurisdiction should take the lead on identifying engineering needs and solutions around your school. Identify a point of contact at the City Planning or Public Works Departments you can work with consistently.

Local jurisdictions benefit from SRTS through reduced congestion and carbon emissions at rush hour, and SRTS infrastructure funding, improvements, and programs that make streets safer for students and other residents.

1. Local Traffic Safety Representative: Local traffic safety committee, if one exists

Other participants on SRTS Team

1. School District Representation: School or district representation: facilities, maintenance, student transportation, etc.

The district can support multi-school events, providing staffing, meeting space, and printing. The district can integrate walking and biking safety curricula, and the impact of reducing vehicle trips by carpooling and bussing, into regular lessons. Staff should eliminate policies that deter SRTS efforts and establish supportive policies. School districts benefit from SRTS through academic improvements from healthier students.

1. Local Government Representation: City council, commission, planner, law enforcement, EMS or fire department, bike/pedestrian advisory committee, transit agency, etc.

Police can provide enforcement around schools and contribute to education efforts. At a minimum, the Team should bring relevant concerns to their attention and suggest appropriate ways for police representatives to be involved in SRTS efforts. The action plan should only include specific police action after identifying activities which the police support. Law enforcement benefit from SRTS through increased traffic safety through changing behaviors. There are more opportunities to educate students about traffic and transportation safety and build positive relationships with the students and SRTS community.

1. Community representation: neighborhood association, chamber of commerce or business association, bike/ped advocates, public health, non-profits, neighborhood associations, etc.

**Section 2: School Information**

This section includes basic information and demographic data about your school.

**Section 3: Vision for School Travel**

Your vision communicates your ideal conditions for the school and community in a one-phrase statement. A vision statement clarifies the Team beliefs and governing principles to the community, Team members, and volunteers. Here are two examples of vision statements:

* “We envision a city of safe and active school communities, where walking and biking are seen as safe, convenient and fun.”
* “The Safe Routes to School program, working with Schools, strives to establish a world-class, student-focused community-based learning system and to create a community that supports and enhances safe walking and biking to school by focusing on equity through engineering, enforcement, evaluation, education and encouragement.”

**Section 4: Existing Conditions for School Travel**

This section describes the current travel environment and behaviors, including how students currently travel to school, community concerns, and activities or policies that either support or hinder walking and bicycling to school.

**Data Collection**

Query students and their parents about how their students arrive and depart from school. Information and instructions for using the Student Tally and Parent Survey forms are found at:?

**Student Tally**

Teachers or volunteers will use this form to record specific information about how children arrive and depart from school. It is a hand-raise tally, conducted in each classroom (takes about 5-7 minutes to complete) for two days within one week (not on a Monday or Friday). The student tally form can be found here: <http://www.saferoutesdata.org/>

**Perceptions of Active Transportation**

The Parent Survey collects information about factors, beliefs and attitudes that affect parents’ decisions about their children walking and bicycling to school. The survey results will help your Team determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school.

For online and downloadable options of the Parent Survey, visit: <http://www.saferoutesdata.org/>

**School Transportation Policies**

Connect with the School District Transportation Department to review the district bussing policy and how it affects student travel mode. Is there a supplemental hazard bussing policy for your school? Are students allowed to walk and roll to school? Please explain the impacts of the travel and bussing policies on active transportation choices.

**Summary of Previous Activities**

For this section please list any previous activities the school has participated in during the current school year and in the past three years. It is important to record historical SRTS activities to connect the dots between the past and the present and possibly expand on the activities. If possible, list who did the work. Is this person still involved in the school and can you connect with that person to help further the goals of the SRTS program?

**Section 5: Key Issues Impacting Safe Walking and Rolling to School**

This section records specific issues that deter students from walking and bicycling to school.

Using the information gathered in Section 3, it is now time for the School Team to analyze the collected maps, walking and biking audits and survey evaluation results to identify the barriers and hazards to children walking and bicycling to the school.

**Walk Audit**

Walk audits are a great tool to gather information about street conditions, engage community members, and inform planning and traffic safety projects. In a walk audit, community members go for a walk together, noting what makes their streets feel comfortable for walking and what is missing. Walk audits can be informal and casual events with just a few friends, or can include city councilmembers, traffic engineers, and detailed forms.

This is done by volunteer observers with clipboard and Walk Audit form at these areas:

* school’s bike rack area, if one exists
* crosswalks or pathways adjacent to the school
* known routes to school for walking and rolling
* bus and/or auto pick-up/drop-off area.

It is recommended that observations be made at least 15 minutes before the start of school until ten minutes after the bell rings. Reverse the process for after school. Make sure the survey is dated, location noted, weather conditions noted, and the time periods of the survey.

This could be conducted for at least two days during a single week, not on Monday or Friday. The street assessments may bring up questions about the motoring environment on certain streets.

Traffic volume counts, posted speeds and actual speeds may be obtained from law enforcement or the local public works department to track motorist speeds and monitor traffic volume counts.

Traffic crash data may be obtained from your local public works department or the ODOT Transportation Safety Division Traffic Records Program. Crash data may also be available from your local law enforcement agency. Crosswalk information may also be obtained from the School Safety Supervisor, school patrol members or adult crossing guards.

Photographs and / or videos

Take pictures or footage during arrival and departure times at the school. Decide in advance where the best vantage points will be to shoot the pictures to capture the representative images. Record locations and street directions, time of day, date. Present the pictures in an order that confirms your narrative and tells the story.

**Travel Patterns**

Walking Conditions and Issues

Are the sidewalks, paths and/or trails on school property connected to logical residential neighborhood access points? Is there room to walk? Are there sidewalks, or shoulders where there were no sidewalks? Are you able to cross safely where you can see and be seen by drivers? Does it feel safe to walk? Can students safely and conveniently reach unlocked school entry doors from these locations?

Walking Safety

Does the school provide safety information and/or participate in events that promote safe walking and physical activity such as International Walk and Bike to School Day or walk-a-thons? Is there pedestrian safety guidance given to students who cross with the School Patrol or Adult Crossing Guard?

Rolling Conditions and Issues

Do you have safe bicycle routes? Are there paths, trails, wide sidewalks, low-traffic streets, bike lanes or good shoulders to ride safely with traffic? Does it feel safe riding with traffic? How was the surface that you rode on? How were the intersections that you rode through?

Rolling Safety and Security

Are visibly-placed bicycle racks available to students at the school? Are there enough to accommodate an increase in bicycles? Can students easily and safely access them? Are they sheltered from the weather? Are bikes in a secure location? Are there opportunities for students to learn about bicycle safety? Are students involved in after-school bike clubs or teams? Is helmet use encouraged?

**Section 6: Identifying Solutions and Making a Plan**

This section will help identify practical steps and activities to help your school reach your goals. Now that the issues have been identified, the School Team is ready to recommend solutions that make up the Action Plan. The expertise of the different School Team members and other interested parties and stakeholders will be especially valuable.

GOALS (HOW MUCH OF WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY WHEN)

The next step is to develop clear, defined, and measurable goals for achieving your

vision.

* What activity or changes will occur?
* Who is responsible to carry out the activity or changes?
* By when will they take place and for how long?
* What resources (money and staff) are needed to carry out these changes?
* How will you include everyone in an equitable way?
* What is your measure of success?

Remember that an action plan is a work in progress. As your team grows, you will want to revise your action plan to fit your community’s changing needs. You may implement many low- and mid-cost solutions in a relatively short time. Careful consideration must be given for each SRTS element: Equity, *Evaluation, Engineering,* *Education,* *Encouragement*, and *Enforcement. (See SRTS Overview for description of elements)*

A few targeted projects can often have large-scale community impacts. Examples of “quick win” activities include the following:

* Training adult crossing guards
* Implementing a Walking School Bus or a Bike Train
* Hosting Walk and Roll to School Day, highlighting walking, biking, bussing and/or carpooling
* Hosting a school-wide assembly to showcase walking, biking, bussing and/or carpooling to school
* Leading small group walk audits
* Submitting success stories to local media
* Reinforcing your messages in a newsletter or on a social media page, tagging other organizations
* Providing (and fitting!) bicycle helmets for students
* Purchasing and installing bike racks
* Purchasing and installing a bicycle maintenance station equipped with tools and tire inflation pump
* Attending and tabling at already-scheduled school events and activities

Evaluate, Improve & Continue

An important piece to any SRTS effort is continually monitoring how efforts have changed behavior—are more kids safely walking, biking, bussing, or sharing the ride and/or have there been noted improvements to traffic flow or more efficient/safer student drop-offs and pick-ups. You also want to gauge if you have met Coalition program goals you set at

the beginning of the effort and then look for ways to enhance or modify them if needed.

• Continue student tallies. Conduct mid or year-end evaluations by tallying walkers and rollers in to and from school and compare the numbers to the baseline traffic count gathered at the beginning of the SRTS Team effort.

1. Are there more families sharing the ride, bussing, walking or rolling?
2. Is the traffic and travel situation improving? Is student arrival and departure going more smoothly?

* Repeat the parent survey. Send out the parent survey again and compare results to data gathered during the first survey.

1. The results should provide a snapshot on whether your efforts have made a difference on parent attitudes about walking, biking or sharing the ride to school—or created more awareness of school traffic and transportation safety.

• Identify additional program champions. Members will cycle in and out during the life of the Team so continue to recruit new members.

• Continue to publicize successes. Gain visibility for activities through local media and school communications.

• Make the work relevant, fun and positive. The more relevant and engaging strategies and activities are, the more others will want to become involved.

• Make the SRTS Team permanent or create a larger community-wide SRTS task force. A permanent community-wide inter-agency task force staffed by the school district, public health department, local hospital, city police, fire, or public works department will provide your group with attention, energy and sustainability.

**Section 7: Public Input**

Once the SRTS team has conducted an initial review of the draft Action Plan, the next step is to involve the greater school and community. By presenting the draft plan and recommendations to the public, the SRTS Team has the opportunity to generate broad support for the SRTS program while gaining additional perspectives on issues and priorities.

Coordination

Work with the lead community contact to set a date and location for the meeting, and discuss potential avenues to advertise the meeting. It will be the responsibility of the lead community contact to advertise for this public meeting. Depending on the nature of your school assignment, appropriate avenues include flyers to the school community, announcement on the school and school district websites, and the local jurisdiction website.

Facilitation

The goal of the meeting is to present the work that has been done to date, and the draft Action Plan, focusing on recommended activities. Every public meeting should be followed by a public comment period. For an example of the public meeting agenda and sign in sheet, see Attachment C.

Example Public Input AGENDA

The content or agenda of the public input meeting will depend on your community, but here are some recommended elements.

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| Introductions | Everyone gives a brief statement of who they are, their organization, if any, and their interest in SRTS. |
| Introduction  to SRTS | Background presentation about SRTS programs, including issues and strategies for the Six “E’s”. |
| SRTS Team  Goals | Each participant can share a goal for what the Coalition could accomplish. Focus on a specific activity, such as:  starting a walking school bus, developing an action plan, educating families about SRTS, etc. |
| Analysis | Conduct an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to understand and agree on Strengths and Weaknesses and to identify available Opportunities and Threats in advancing Safe Routes to School. |
| Next Steps &  Wrap‐Up | Summarize the tasks to be done before the next meeting and agree on who will do them. Schedule the next  meeting. |

* + Interview key stakeholders – Circle back to key stakeholders who are not part of the SRTS Team, such as Principals, crossing guards, parents, local traffic engineers and law enforcement, and ask them to review the draft STP.
  + Solicit student opinions – Students often have a unique perspective on walking and bicycling to school. After all, they are the ones doing it! The SRTS team can find out what students think about the findings in the STP. Suggested avenues for student input include the student council, during an assembly or as part of an essay assignment.

They may also choose to make a presentation to the PTA, hold a meeting with a local bicycle advocacy organization, or have discussion with student walkers could identify additional concerns or countermeasures of interest to them. Record the Findings Once the public meeting has been held, record the findings into Section 6 of the Action Plan Template. If the team has pursued additional avenues for public input, record those as well. Briefly describe the process used to solicit public input and provide a bulleted summary of key input received.

More information on the Safe Routes to School can be found on the Oregon Safe Routes to School website: oregonsaferoutes.org